

ANNALS OF NATURAL HISTORY.

VII.—*On a new Species of Bat found in the County of Durham, and preserved in the Museum belonging to the Durham University.* By the Rev. LEONARD JENYNS, M.A., F.L.S., &c.

[With a Plate.]

DURING a visit at Durham last autumn, I noticed in the Museum attached to the University of that town a *White Bat*, which I at first supposed to be merely an accidental variety of one of our common species. On a closer inspection I perceived that it could not be referred to any species I was acquainted with; and on making application to Mr. Fox, the well-known naturalist of that place, who was accompanying me at the time, I was kindly entrusted by that gentleman with the loan of the specimen, to enable me on my return home to submit it to a more rigorous examination. This I have accordingly done; and I have little hesitation in pronouncing it to be distinct from all the bats which have been hitherto met with in this country, and as far as my knowledge goes, from all those described by continental authors. There is no ground for supposing that its white colour is otherwise than accidental; but it possesses other characters, those especially derived from the form of the tragus, of sufficient importance, I think, to mark its peculiarity.

I learnt upon inquiry, that this bat had been obtained some time preceding in the church of Auckland St. Andrew, which place is about twelve miles S.W. of Durham. It is now stuffed, on which account it is not possible to take some of the measurements with as much accuracy as could be wished. But the parts are well displayed; and the exact form of the auricle and tragus in particular may be correctly traced.

I propose to designate this bat by the name of *Vespertilio ædilis*. And the following may serve as its specific character;

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—to which I shall annex a more detailed description, and a table of dimensions.

V. auriculis ovatis, marginibus externis sinuatis, caput longitudine æquantibus; trago dimidio brevior, margine interno recto, externo subarcuato ante apicem emarginato: patagio interfemorali subtus punctis, hic illic sparsis, setigeris.

In the form of the head and in its general physiognomy, this bat resembles the *V. mystacinus* more than any other of our British species. The *snout* is short, but moderately attenuated, and slightly emarginate at the tip between the nostrils. The *forehead* appears elevated from the erect fur on that part. The *face* and upper part of the muzzle are hairy. There is some indication of a *moustache* on the upper lip, with longer hairs interspersed: there are also a few long hairs on the chin. The *ears* are about the length of the head*, widely separate, oval, obtuse at the extremity, bending outwards: their inner margin convex, and folded back near the base; the outer margin with a moderately deep sinus about half-way down, but immediately beneath the sinus expanding into a rounded lobe. On the whole the auricle very much resembles that of the *V. mystacinus* and *V. emarginatus*, but it is not so deeply notched. The *tragus* is of a very peculiar form, and unlike that of any other species. It is not quite half the length of the auricle, if this last be measured in front; but rather more than half if measured behind: its greatest breadth is not quite one third of its own length: the inner margin is perfectly straight; the outer one arcuate, with a small but rather deep notch a little below the tip which is rounded; there is a somewhat similar notch at bottom, and beneath it a projecting lobe, but these last may also be observed, though not so distinctly, in *V. mystacinus*:—were it not for the upper notch and rounded apex, the form of the *tragus* would be nearly that of a small segment of a circle, the broadest part being in the middle. The *flying and interfemoral membranes* are naked and moderately ample; the latter without any transverse ciliated lines, but dotted irregularly on the under surface with some minute white glands, from each of which

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Dimensions.

	Inc.	Lin.
Length of the head and body	2	0
—— of the tail	1	3
—— of the ear (<i>behind</i>)	0	4½
—— of the ear (<i>in front</i>)	0	6
—— of the tragus.....	0	2½
Breadth of the ear.....	0	3 perhaps more.
—— of the tragus (<i>in the middle of its length</i>) ...	0	0¾
Length of the arm	0	7
—— of the fore arm.....	1	4½
—— of the thumb	0	3
Extent of the flying membrane	10*	

I have compared this bat closely with specimens of most of our British species, with which it can possibly be confounded. It may be of use to point out the leading differences in each case.

From *V. Nattereri* it may be at once distinguished by its smaller ears and shorter tragus, independently of other characters. From *V. Pipistrellus*, by its larger size altogether, sharper snout, longer fore arm and thumb, longer and more slender tragus. From *V. mystacinus*, by its somewhat superior size and greater amplitude of wing ; by the ears not being so deeply notched, and the tragus not subulate, but of the form already described ; larger feet ; want of transverse lines on the interfemoral membrane, &c. From *V. Daubentonii*,

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(which species it approaches most nearly, especially in size and general proportions,) by its sharper snout, its peculiarly formed tragus, and the absence of ciliated lines beneath the interfemoral.

Of the *V. emarginatus* I possess no specimen for comparison. But it differs from Geoffroy's description and figure of that species*, in the ears being smaller as well as less deeply notched on their external margins, and in the tragus not being subulate, as before stated. The flying membrane also is not quite so ample. But on the whole the proportions are not very dissimilar.

It may still be inquired how far the above distinguishing characters may be trusted as indicating a specific difference. This however, is a question, to which, in the present state of the science, no certain reply can be made. It is in general hazardous to establish new species from single specimens. But in no instance hitherto, have I ever seen any appreciable variation in the form of the tragus, which is the great peculiarity in the one now described. And whether I am right or not in assigning so high an importance to this character, I conceive it will be of equal advantage to science to have brought it under the notice of the naturalist. It is only by tracing every variation of form, with a view to ascertaining the real value of characters, that we can arrive ultimately at a true knowledge of the value of species. If the one here described be a mere variety, it would seem to be a variety of the *V. Daubentonii*, to which on the whole it makes the nearest approach.

I have only to add, that this bat will shortly be returned to the Museum at Durham, where it may be seen by those naturalists who may have an opportunity of visiting that collection; and I beg to express my acknowledgements to Mr. Fox for permission to examine it.

REFERENCE TO THE PLATE.

PLATE III. fig. 1. is a dorsal view of *V. ædilis*.—Fig. 2. is a front view of the head enlarged.

Swaffham Bulbeck, Feb. 2, 1839.

* Ann. du Mus. tom. viii. p. 198. pl. 46.

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